

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 DLOS-09 EB-08 COME-00 CG-00 DOTE-00
OMB-01 TRSE-00 /097 W
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R 291750Z MAR 78
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1502
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: EFIS CU
SUBJ: US-CUBAN FISHERY TECHNICAL TALKS

1. SUMMARY: WHILE PUSHING STRONGLY FOR US GULF ZONE SNAPPER, GROUPER, AND SHRIMP, CUBANS SEEMED CONTENT AT PROSPECT OF ONLY OBTAINING SHARK QUOTA IN GULF. CUBANS SAID THEY WERE "ENCOURAGED" BY US EFFORTS TO SORT OUT NORTHWEST ATLANTIC BYCATCH PROBLEMS. CUBANS MADE STRONG PITCH FOR US-CUBAN COOPERATION ON FISHERIES RESEARCH. US DELEGATION PUSHED FOR IMPROVED RECREATIONAL FISHING OPPORTUNITIES IN CUBAN WATERS.
END SUMMARY.

2. THE FOLLOWING REPORT HAS NOT BEEN CLEARED BY CHAIRMAN OF USDEL.

3. US DELEGATION, HEADED BY MR. CARMEN BLONDIN, NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS), DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, AND COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF NMFS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AND GULF REGIONAL FISHERIES COUNCIL, HELD TECHNICAL TALKS IN HAVANA, MARCH 20-23, PURSUANT TO INVITATION FROM CUBAN MINISTRY OF FISHING INDUSTRY. MAIN THRUST OF CUBAN PRESENTATION WAS TO ASSERT CLAIM FOR SNAPPER, GROUPER, SHRIMP,
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AND SHARK FISHERIES IN US FISHERY CONTROL ZONE IN GULF OF MEXICO AND TO POINT UP DIFFICULTY FOR PRIMITIVELY-EQUIPPED CUBAN GULF FLEET TO COMPLY FULLY WITH SOME US FISHING REGULATIONS.

4. USDEL POINTED OUT THAT US DOMESTIC REQUIREMENTS MADE IT EXTREMELY UNLIKELY THAT CUBANS WOULD RECEIVE SNAPPER,

GROUPER, OR SHRIMP QUOTA IN GULF. ONLY POSSIBLE DIRECTED FISHERY, USDEL SAID, WOULD BE FOR SURPLUS SHARK QUOTA AVAILABLE IN ZONE. CUBANS, THOUGH DISAPPOINTED, APPEARED TO ACCEPT SITUATION, ASKING ONLY THAT US SAIDE CONSIDER ASSIGNING CUBA SMALL GROUPER QUOTA FOR USE AS SHARK BAIT AND CREW FOOD. USDEL, WHILE AGREEING TO STUDY QUESTION, SUGGESTED THAT CUBANS SEEK SHARK BAIT WITHIN BYCATCH OF THEIR NON-US ZONE GULF SHRIMP FISHERIES.

5. CUBANS, LOOKING TOWARD LONGER TERM, SUGGESTED INFORMALLY THAT US AND CUBA AGREE TO BROAD RESEARCH COOPERATION AND COORDINATION TO DETERMINE OPTIMAL GULF FISHERY STOCKS AND EXPLOITATION. USDEL DEFERRED REPLY TON BRAD, COOPERATIVE PROGRAM, BUT AGREED TO HOLDING OF ONE TECHNICAL MEETING IN COMING YEAR TO DISCUSS SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS OF SHARK FISHERIES.

6. ON NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES, USDEL DESCRIBED US INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS UNDERWAY LOOKING TOWARD POSSIBLE APPROACH TO PROBLEMS WHICH US BYCATCH REGULATIONS POSE FOR MANY COUNTRIES, INCLUDING CUBA. (FYI REGULATIONS REQUIRE THAT ALL FISHING CEASE WHEN ANY BYCATCH QUOTA REACHED. END FYI) IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT, WHILE THERE MIGHT BE POSSIBILITY FOR LATER SQUID BYCATCH REALLOCATION, LOW MACKEREL BYCATCH ALLOCATIONS, BECAUSE OF US DOMESTIC REQUIREMENTS, ARE ESSENTIAL AND IMMUTABLE. USDEL POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY, SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY NEW LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ENGLAND AND MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL FISHERY COUNCILS, TO TRY TO DEVELOP POSSIBLE, CAREFULLY MONITORED RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR ONE OR A LIMITED NUMBER OF FOREIGN VESSELS. IF ACCEPTED, USDEL SAID, SUCH A PROGRAM MIGHT PROVIDE FOR CONTINUED COMMERCIAL HAKE FISHING BYOND JUNE 30 END OF SEASON AND IN AREA BEYOND WINDOW 5. PROGRAM COULD INCLUDE EXPLOITATION OF TECHNICAL ALTERNATIVES TO LIMIT MACKEREL BYCATCH (REDUCED TRAWL SPEED, AVOIDANCE OF ZONES OF MACKEREL CONCENTRATION, OPERATION IN MONTHS OFLOW MACKEREL ABUNDANCE), SOME OF WHICH HAD BEEN SUGGESTED BY CUBANS. CUBAN DEL SAID THEY WERE ENCOURAGED BY US EFFORTS AND WOULD REPORT THIS FACT TO THEIR HIGHER AUTHORITIES. AS PRECAUTION AGAINST QUICKLY REACHING BYCATCH QUOTA, CUBANS SAID THEY WOULD INITIALLY SEND ONLY ONE BOAT INTO US ZONE, DELAYING DEPLOYMENT OF OTHERS UNTIL US APPROACH TO BYCATCH PROBLEM BECOMES CLEARER.

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7. ON MORE MUNDANE MATTERS CONCERNING GULF FISHERIES, CUBANS ASKED FOR "UNDERSTANDING" ON US SIDE REGARDING US INSPECTION AND OBSERVER REQUIREMENTS, US REGULATIONS THAT GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION AND CATCH DATA BE PRECISELY NOTED, AND US COMMUNICATIONS REQUIREMENTS. ON INSPECTION/ OBSERVER ISSUE, IN RESPONSE TO CUBAN CONCERNS REGARDING SECURITY OF FLORIDA PORTS, USDEL SAID THAT IT WOULD CONSIDER POSSIBILITY OF EXEMPTING CUBAN BOATS FROM REQUIREMENT TO ENTER PORTS FOR INSPECTION. USDEL, HOWEVER, DID NOT RESPOND POSITIVELY TO CUBAN REQUEST THAT US INSPECTORS AND OBSERVERS NOT BE OF CUBAN ORIGIN. USDEL SIMPLY STATED THAT INSPECTORS AND OBSERVERS WOULD BE "RESPONSIBLE." ON GEOGRAPHICAL POSITIONING AND LOG DATA REQUIREMENTS, USDEL SAID THAT, WHILE FALSIFICATION WOULD NOT BE TOLERATED, US WOULD BE "CONSTRUCTIVE" IN ITS APPROACH AND WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT LIMITATIONS IN CUBAN TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL TRAINING. ON COMMUNICATIONS, USDEL AGREED TO CUBAN REQUEST THAT COMMUNICATIONS BE HANDLED CENTRALLY FROM HAVANA, RATHER THAN FROM INDIVIDUAL CUBAN FLEETS.

8. USDEL, CITING DESIRABILITY OF RECIPROCITY FOR US ZONE FISHING PRIVILEGES, CALLED FOR EASED CUBAN PROCEDURES FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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US RECREATIONAL FISHING IN CUBAN WATERS. PARTICULARLY BOTHERSOME, USDEL SAID, IS CURRENTLY EXISTING PROHIBITION OF ENTRY OF US VESSELS (NOT PROGRAMMED BY CUBATUR) INTO CUBAN PORTS. CUBAN BORDER GUARD AND CUBATUR REPRESENTATIVES OUTLINED CURRENT PRACTICE WHICH ALLOWS PORT ENTRY FOR GROUPS OF VESSELS PROGRAMMED BY CUBATUR WITH THIRTY DAY ADVANCE NOTICE

(FYI CUBATUR, CITING GROUND TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS, STATED THAT SMALLEST GROUP NOW ACCEPTABLE WOULD BE GROUP TOTALLING ABOUT 25 PEOPLE..END FYI) CUBANS DID, HOWEVER, STATE THAT THEY WOULD CONSIDER NOTE FROM US SIDE COMMENTING ON INCONVENIENCES OF CURRENT PROCEDURES. (COMMENT: CORRIDOR COMMENTS OF BORDER GUARD AND CUBATUR REPRESENTATIVES SUGGEST CUBANS MAY BE PREPARED TO ACCOMMODATE VISITS OF INDIVIDUAL US YACHTS AND FISHING VESSELS AT DESIGNATED PORTS - APPARENTLY VARADERO AND BARLOVENTO/ HAVANA - WITH PERHAPS SHORTENED ADVANCE NOTICE AND INSPECTION AS SEA BEFORE ENTRY.)

9. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT REQUESTED TO PREPARE DRAFT NOT ON RECREATIONAL FISHERIES WITHIN CUBAN ZONE FOR PRESENTATION TO APPROPRIATE CUBAN AUTHORITIES HERE IN HAVANA.

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